



SPEECH BY YAB TUN DR. MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD, PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA

**AT THE OPENING CEREMONY FOR THE 3RD CONFERENCE OF THE LEAGUE OF
'PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR AL-QUDS'
ON 8 FEBRUARY 2020 (SATURDAY), AT 9.00 AM AT ONE WORLD HOTEL,
KUALA LUMPUR**

1. It is indeed an honour to be invited to officiate the 3rd Conference of The League of Parliamentarians for Al-Quds this morning. Congratulations to The League and its Executive Committee for their commitment and persistence in organising this event. It is a noble effort in pursuit of peace, security, justice and freedom of Palestine and its people.

THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE AND THEIR CAUSE

2. The plight of the Palestinian is a central issue for many international communities irrespective of religion, ethnicity or nation. Given the concern for the issue, it is incumbent upon us as citizens of the world to ensure the issue is not trivialised, dismissed or swept under the carpet.
3. I believe this Conference provides another opportunity for discourses and actions as the persecution, intimidation, victimisation and genocidal acts against the Palestinians are going on relentlessly.
4. This Conference today is a congregation of global parliamentarians - individually and collectively we can utilise all the platforms available, both domestically and internationally, for us to continue voicing our concerns and register our anger over the inhumane and barbaric acts that the Tel Aviv regime has inflicted on the Palestinians.
5. We are duty bound and this responsibility is further amplified when powerful nations that had styled themselves as the defender of justice and freedom choose to be silent while the atrocities are being committed.
6. In other words, if we too choose to be silent, the blood from the murders and killings of the Palestinians by the Israelis is on our hands as well.
7. Platforms such as The League of Parliamentarians for Al-Quds, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parliamentary Blocs and others, can be more effective if we were to strategise and coordinate our efforts.
8. I am also honoured that The League had chosen Malaysia as the host for this Conference. I would want to believe that the choice reflects the strong and consistent position that Malaysia had always taken on the Palestinian plight. And surely, everyone present here today share our sentiments and the disgust we feel towards the gross injustices committed against the Palestinians. This conference is indeed a testament of our collective re-affirmation of our undivided stand on the plight of the Palestinians.

UN RESOLUTIONS

9. Our stand and demands, if we wish to call them that, are not without basis. Paragraphs 1 and 2 of the UN Resolution 3236 mentioned that: "*The General Assembly of the United Nations confirms*

the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in Palestine, in particular it's right to self-determination without external interference and the right to its independence and national sovereignty, and also affirms the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to return to their homes and property from which they have been displaced".

10. We are therefore, merely upholding the UN Resolutions that had been passed. What good would resolutions after resolutions being adopted if they can be ignored with impunity. Worse still the very opposite of the resolutions are carried out.
11. For instance, as recent as 7 January 2020, Israel has approved the construction of nearly 2,000 new settler homes on Palestinian territories, as mentioned by Peace Now, an anti-settlement watchdog group. Never in the history of nations has countries-built settlements in other countries and claim the right to own them. This is a form of conquest based on the strength of a bully.
12. According to prisoners' rights group Addameer, more than 12,000 Palestinian children have been detained by the Israeli army since the year 2000, and serving time in the same detention facilities as adult Palestinian prisoners.
13. Humanitarian groups such as UNICEF have long documented Israeli violations against Palestinian children, who are prosecuted in Israeli military courts. It is clear that these detainees are being used by Israel to exchanges for Israeli soldiers captured during incidents. For all these Israel should be condemned and punished. Instead powerful countries like the U.S. which talk so much about freedom and the Rule of Law choose to legalise the illegal. This President Trump has legalise the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem as "the Deal of the Century".
14. The deal is a one-sided deal hatched by the U.S. and Israel without consultation with the Palestinians that spiked any attempts to bring peace or justice to Palestine. This "peace plan" acknowledges only the powerful occupier while completely ignoring the rights of the oppressed.
15. The deal will never result in a contiguous sovereign Palestinian State, on the contrary, it will only further the domination of an apartheid-like occupation over millions of Palestinians. The last time this happened was when Germany occupied Danzig and Sudetenland.
16. To make things worse, the deal of the century hands over the holy city of Jerusalem on a silver platter to the Israeli side; in absolute disregard for the feelings of millions of Muslims and Christians worldwide.
17. This deal will only bring more conflicts to the region, and will antagonise billions of people around the world.
18. Malaysia finds the proposal utterly unacceptable and is grossly unjust. It is truly disappointing that after more than seven decades, only one side of the Two-State Solution has come into form – Israel - while the Palestinian people are still left struggling for justice, peace, and a sovereign state of their own. The international efforts at finding a just solution to this issue have remained mostly unsuccessful or unimplemented.

THE PALESTINIAN NAKBA

19. The Palestinian Nakba or catastrophe where there was mass expulsion of Palestinian Arabs from British Mandated Palestine during Israel's creation did not end in 1948. It continues until today, in the form of Israel's ongoing theft of Palestinian land for settlements and for Jewish communities inside Israel.

20. The world continues to witness Its destruction of Palestinian homes and agricultural land, revocation of residency rights, deportations, periodic brutal military assaults that result in mass civilian casualties such as the one that took place in Gaza in the summer of 2014, and the denial of the internationally-recognised legal right of return of millions of stateless Palestinian refugees.

CONCLUSION

21. While Malaysia wants to be friends with all countries and respect their sovereignty regardless of their ideological beliefs, we must continue to speak against injustices and in defending the rights of the oppressed.

22. Malaysia's foreign policy towards Palestine has remained the same since decades ago when we became independent. We will always support Palestine. The Palestinian Declaration of Independence proclaimed the establishment of the State of Palestine on 15 November 1988. Many countries, including Malaysia, promptly acknowledged it.

23. On that note, I wish to again congratulate The League of Parliamentarians for al-Quds for organising the Conference with the patronage of YBhg Tan Sri Mohamad Ariff Md Yusof, Speaker of Malaysian Parliament and the assistance of many behind the scenes including MPs, Malaysian NGOs, media and other agencies.

24. I hope you will have a very successful Conference and an enjoyable stay in Malaysia. May Allah bless you and give you strength in your struggle for justice.

25. With that, ladies and gentlemen, Bismillahir Rahman Nir Rahim, in the name of Allah the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful, it gives me great pleasure to officiate the opening of the Conference.

Thank you.